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1963/04/09

NOTES re CUBAN TRIP

April 5 9, 1963

On this trip, Donovan reached a firm agreement with Castro for release of the 22 remaining Americans on April 22. The 4 Cubans are to be released at Key West the following day, April 23.

This agreement was reached at a night-long conference beginning at 2:15 and ending at 6:30, Sunday morning. Details of the release followed a long discussion of the possibility of better American-Cuban relations as evidenced by recent Life, Look and Nation articles.

In this conference, and throughout the 24-hour period beginning at midnight Sunday, Castro commented at some length on the following topics:

guerrilla warfare

regular military forces

civilian militia forces

the revolution, 1956 - 58

Herbert Mathews

Morgan, the American

national parks

the present Cuban school system

collective farms

the small farmer (peasant)

climatic-economic conditions (sugar crop)

Secretary McNamara

1964 New York World's Fair

organization of amateur athletics in Cuba

attendance at sports events

At Playa Larga and Playa Giron (2 beaches at the Bay of Pigs) Castro described the 1961 invasion battle at considerable length. Specifically he discussed:

his advance information of the invasion

his movements during battle

communications

use of tactical air

antiaircraft defenses

invasion strategy

use of paratroops

access roads and salt marshes

During the day we drove from Varadero on the north coast across the island, through Matanzas Province, to the Bay of Pigs. On Castro's boat, escorted by other craft including a PT boat, we

went out into the Bay of Pigs to fish. We returned to shore in the late afternoon and inspected the fishing school now located at Playa Giron where the main battle of the invasion was fought.

On the return trip to Havana late Monday night we viewed a number of workers resorts, new apartments and other new construction.

JEN